TL4448

Human Rights in East Timor

Adopted by the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism
April 6-9, 1997
Washington, D.C.

Background

Our sacred texts, as well as our historical experience, oblige us to speak out in defense of the preservation of human rights for all peoples. On Passover, we are obligated to remember that we were once slaves in the land of Egypt, and that God led us out of bondage with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. As we were redeemed from slavery, so must we help others on their journey from oppression to freedom. It is in this spirit that we speak out against the deplorable human rights violations in East Timor.

We express our outrage at violations of human rights in East Timor by the Indonesian military occupying authorities and forces. We are dismayed with the role of the United States, which supplied 90% of the weapons used by Indonesia in its 1975 invasion of East Timor, and which continues to legitimize General Suharto's regime through its negotiations concerning the sale of twenty advanced fighter aircraft.

We also congratulate Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo and Dr. José Ramos Horta upon their receipt of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize. Along with other communities of faith, we share the Nobel Committee's hope that this award will spur efforts to bring a peaceful and just resolution to the situation in East Timor, one recognizing the fundamental right of the people of that nation to self-determination.

THEREFORE, the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism resolves to

1. Call upon the United States government to support international initiatives to end the devastating human rights abuses in East Timor, and to cease military support to Indonesia until such a resolution is actively pursued; and,

2. Urge our congregations to educate their congregants and the public on the gravity of the situation in East Timor, and encourage our member congregations, in the spirit of Jewish tradition and Jewish experience, to voice their commitment to and concern for the people of East Timor.

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